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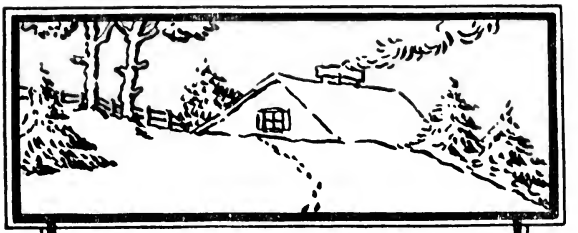

A Topsy Turvy Christmas

GUPTILL

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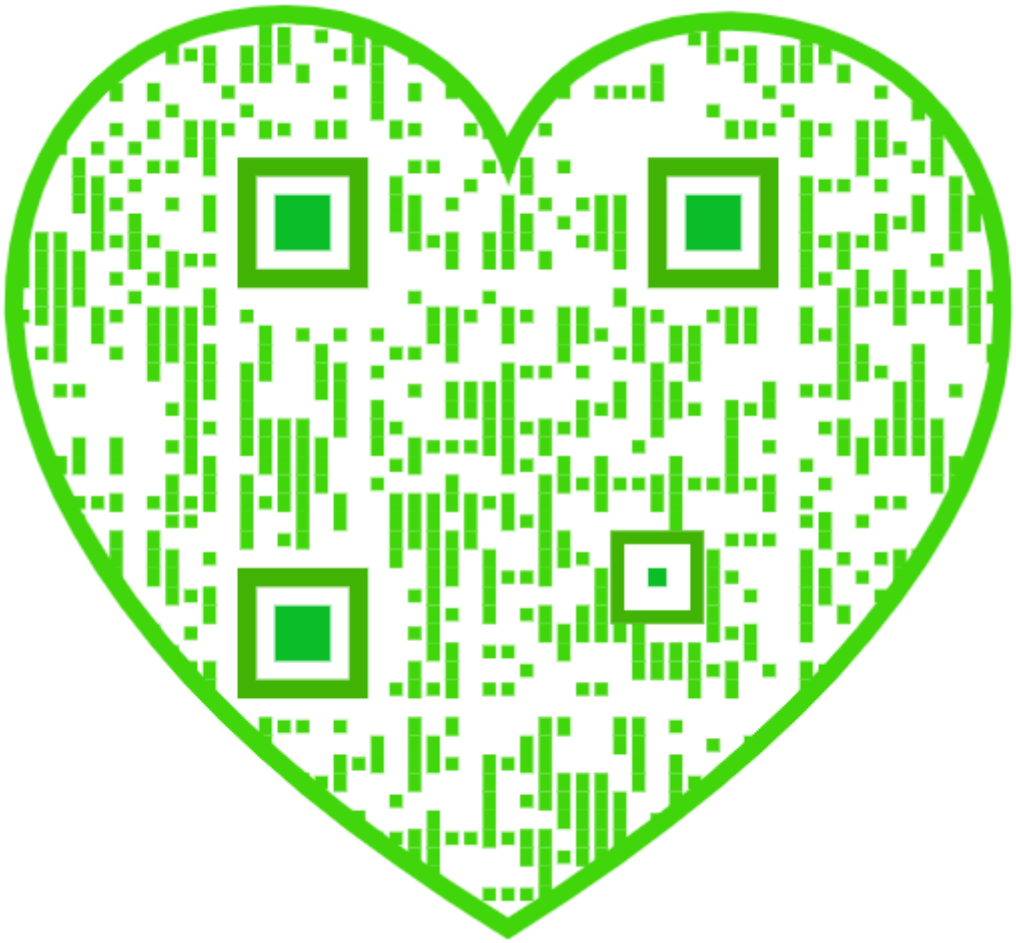
DAYTON, OHIO



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A TOPSY-TURVY CHRISTMAS

By

ELIZABETH F. GUPTILL

Author of "Christmas at Punkin Holler," "Christmas at McCarthy's," Etc.

PAINE PUBLISHING COMPANY
DAYTON, OHIO

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CHARACTERS

FRANK—A boy of twelve
ALICE—A girl of ten
} The Earth children.

KNARF—A Topsy Turvy boy; really a boy of fourteen or fifteen.

ECILA—His sister; a girl somewhat taller.

DERF—Their little brother; the tallest boy obtainable.

MOM—Their mother; a girl of nine or ten.

DAD—Their father; a boy of seven or eight.

MARG—Their grandmother; the smallest girl who can learn the part.

THE SPANKETY MAN—A boy of ten or twelve.

THE TEACHER—A boy of ten or twelve.

CLANTY SAUCE—A very tall, thin boy.

GOTHER MOOSE—A short, fat girl, of seven or eight.

FAIRY—A tiny girl.

GREENIES—Any number of small girls. Two will do, but four are better.

A small boy to be in CLANTY SAUCE's box is also needed.

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COSTUMES AND PROPERTIES

FRANK and ALICE wear the usual school clothes of children of their ages.

MARG, the tiny Grandmother, has her hair powdered, parted in the middle, and combed down over her ears. She wears a cap, and spectacles, from which the lenses have been removed. Her dress is long, of gray material, with white apron and kerchief, which may be on wrong side to.

MOM, the children's mother, wears her hair high, her dress long. This dress is preferably a wrapper or tea-gown worn "hind side before." She wears an apron, also, one of the round, tea aprons, either behind or over one hip. She may have a lace collar, pinned behind.

DAD wears long trousers, with his socks pulled up outside, a swallow tail coat, and vest, both "hind side before."

ECILA wears a very short dress, white, or light colored, with a sash of some other color, preferably red, tied in front. She may wear beads, which hang down her back. If her hair is long, part it, comb each side up to the top, and begin to braid there. Braid tightly, and loop it, so loops will stand out and up pinning into place, if necessary. Tie ribbons around base of loops. If her hair has the Dutch cut, bring the top hair, which is left longer, as far as possible, and tie a ribbon around it, so that it stands up in the front, just over the forehead, being the bow. She has short socks.

KNARF wears short trousers—decidedly short—with frills at the bottom of bright color. His blouse may be Russian or sailor, but must be on "hind side before," and have collar and cuffs of bright color. A suit of green and white awning stripe, with bright pink trimmings, would be very effective. Comb his hair in any peculiar way that that particular boy's hair can be coaxed to stay. His stockings are long, striped around with bright blue.

DERF should have a wig, if at all possible, of long curls. Tie one or two up on the side, with a blue ribbon. He has short socks, and knickers of material to match his dress, that end above the knee. The dress may be a kilted skirt and a sailor or middy blouse of white, with blue trimmings. A sash, with tassels, passes round his waist, and knots at one side. The big sailor collar should be in front, instead of behind.

THE TEACHER wears a cap and gown, like those of graduates, wrong side to. He may have glasses.

THE SPANKETY MAN is dressed in a dark red cambric garment, with tight-fitting waist and trousers, in one. It is buttoned behind,

with large buttons. This suit has high neck, long, close sleeves, and trousers that button closely round the ankles. He may wear a visor cap, with the visor behind, or any hat or cap that can be made noticeable, when improperly worn. He carries a bag with assorted "spankers." These may be two or three switches, a slipper, a hair-brush, a razor-strop, a fly-killer, an egg-turner, a small fire-shovel, a shingle, and one or two "spankers" with handles cut from shingles. He should choose one with which to emphasize his song.

THE FAIRY wears a fluffy, full dress of white, pale pink, or blue, as desired. It has a full waist, and a very full, short skirt. It may be of crepe paper, mosquito netting, or of some sheer material. She should have short wings, which may be made of a square of the goods, folded into an oblong, and gathered along one side where two edges meet, then fastened among the folds at the back of the waist. More gauzy wings may be made of wired gauze or netting. She should have a silver wand, with a star at the end, and a silver girdle. Her hair should be flowing, with a silver band around it, and a star above her forehead. Her stockings may be white, or may match the dress; the slippers should be white or silver.

GOTHER MOOSE wears a long red skirt, a long black cape and a tall, pointed hat of red, with a black band.

THE GREENIES, of whom there may be any number from two to six, are dressed entirely in green, of course. They wear green stockings, green pointed shoes, made from cloth, full, short bloomers, and a long, loose blouse, belted in. They have tall, pointed caps, at the peak of which is sewed a bell, the peak being bent down, to hang at one side. Any shade of green will do, but the whole costume should be in the same shade. If the green stockings are not easily had, color white ones. Each carries a long green ribbon, strung with tiny bells.

CLANTY SAUCE should be the tallest, thinest boy obtainable, dressed in some striped material, the stripes, running up and down. The trousers are close-fitting, and reach the ankle. The tunic reaches a little below the waist, and is belted in, high under the arms. He wears a tall hat, very tall and small around, covered with the striped material.

SETTING.

There should be an inner curtain which shuts off most of the stage. At the beginning of Scene I, this curtain is down. If this inner curtain can have on it any common outdoor scene, so much the better. The first part of the play is enacted before this inner curtain. When the curtain rises, which it should do as swiftly and

silently as possible, it discloses Topsy Turvy Land—an outdoor scene. Small trees should be placed at the back. Plant the top branches—the ones in the center, firmly in pots or pails of earth, and have stems and roots upward. Fasten odd-looking fruits upon the branches, by means of fine wire, so that they "hang upward" instead of downward. A gate and fence may be in the background, if desired. These may be made of very light strips of wood, or of cardboard. Have the gateposts square at the top, with ornamental balls, or other shapes, at the bottom. From these, to the sides, fasten two horizontal pieces, one very near the top, the other farther down. Fasten the pickets to these, pointing downward with a good space between them and the bottom. A few cardboard birds, like those the children make and color in the first grade and kindergarten, should be fastened, so that they seem to be perching on the under sides of the branches of the trees. A garden bench or two may be behind the fence, wrong side up. Have one near the front, on one side, so all the characters need not stand, all the time; but whenever Frank or Alice sit down, they turn it up properly, while when the others sit, they turn it back. Let this happen occasionally, through first scene. For Scene II, both curtains are up, but be careful to have all the setting where it will be hidden by the inner curtain when it falls, near the end of the play.

This scene, which is a room in the house occupied by Alice and Frank, should have a small table, and several chairs, all upside down. Two or three pictures hang upside down on the walls. There may be a shelf, with everything topsy turvy. A rug, rolled up, is on the floor, near one side, and is used as a seat by Marg and Mom. If there is room, have a tiny stand in one corner—the kind of stand that has a lower shelf. This must be wrong side up, and on the shelf may be topsy turvy ornament, jardiniere, or lamp. Leave room for Clanty Sauce's box, near the center. The last part of the play is enacted with the inner curtain down, as in the first part.

Clanty's box is large enough to hold a small boy, and all the gifts enumerated. It should be on casters, so the Greenies can pull it in. In it is a small boy. He is neither seen nor heard, but he must be able to pass out the correct presents quickly.

Scene I. A TOPSY TURVY CHRISTMAS.

Scene I.

(Enter Alice, angrily, runs across front of stage, clenches fists, stamps—in short, has a real temper fit, and ends by throwing herself down, and screaming noisily. Enter Frank, sulkily. He goes slowly and sullenly to where Alice is crying, then stops, looking sullenly down at her.)

FRANK—What's the matter, Alice?

ALICE—I'm mad.

FRANK—So I see. What about?

ALICE—(*looking up*) What are you mad about, yourself? You look like a thunder cloud.

FRANK—I'm not mad.

ALICE—Yes, you are,too. I know. (*gets up*) What is the matter, truly?

FRANK (*crossly*) Nothing, I tell you. What were you screeching so for?

ALICE—'Cause I was mad, I tell you.

FRANK—What for?

ALICE—Say, I'll tell you what I was mad at, if you will, too. Will you?

FRANK—*Perhaps*—well, yes, I suppose I could. You first, though.

ALICE—No, you.

FRANK—Ladies first, always.

ALICE—There, that's it, exactly. That "always." Why should a thing always be just the same? You must always say "ladies first," and both of us must offer each other the biggest piece, when we want it ourselves, and always mind what the grown-ups say, and shut the door, and a whole lot of nonsense. Why Shouldn't the grown-ups mind us part of the time?

FRANK—Is that what you are mad at?

ALICE—Yes, it is. My mother thinks I ought to mind everything she says, and never talk back, and when I said I was going over to Kitty's she said I couldn't, and when I—argued a little about it, she said I was saucy, and spanked me. I wish I could find a place where mothers had to mind their children a while, and see how they like it.

FRANK—So do I. My teacher kept me after school because I couldn't answer every question in my geography lesson. Why don't she answer some of them? We scholars have to do all the work, and the teacher just listens and watches for something to find fault with, all the time.

ALICE—I know. Why don't they let us ask the questions? It would be much the best way, I'm sure. And rules. I'm so sick of rules. You mustn't do this and you mustn't do that, and if you do, some one will punish you. I'd like to live where there weren't any rules at all, and where children were the biggest for a spell. Wouldn't I teach them a thing or two?

FRANK—There isn't any such place, I'm afraid. I never learned about it in my geography.

ALICE—You've never been way through it yet. Perhaps there is, now. Let's hunt for it.

FRANK—All right, let's. (*They sit down on floor, and open geography, turning the leaves slowly.*)

ALICE—Oh dear. I can't read half fast enough. It would take most a year to read all that, and two more years to study all the maps. Let's go ask one of the High School boys or girls. They've learned it all.

FRANK—No, let's don't. They'd only laugh at us. The big ones always do. Let's go look for it ourselves. We'll have adventures on the way, most likely, and it will be great sport.

ALICE—All right, let's. Shall we start now?

FRANK—Sure. Shall I go this way and you that, like Red Riding Hood and the wolf, or shall we go together?

ALICE—Oh, together. I'd be afraid to go alone, I'm sure. Hark! What was that? (*A little tinkle is heard.*)

FRANK—Sounded like a very little bit of a bell.

ALICE—Listen, and see if it comes again. (*The tinkle grows louder, and the fairy trips lightly on stage.*)

ALICE AND FRANK TOGETHER—Oh!

FAIRY—I'm the Fairy Tinkle Bell, of Everywhere. I heard two little children wishing for a new land, and I've come to show them the way.

ALICE—Oh goody, goody. Won't I have to mind there?

FAIRY—No.

FRANK—And are things different than they are here?

FAIRY—Yes, indeed.

ALICE—Then we'll go. Take us now, good Fairy, do.

FRANK—How far is it?

FAIRY—So far that you never could find the way alone, but I can take you there in one moment. You have only to do as I say.

BOTH CHILDREN—Oh, we will, we will.

FAIRY—Then take hold of hands, close your eyes, and go round three times, saying "Topsy Turvy" three times, slowly. Then say "Here we are" and open your eyes. That is all.

(*Children do so. Fairy waves wand, and curtain rises as she flits out. Children open eyes.*)

FRANK—(*who is facing audience*) What next? Why, where is she?

ALICE—Why, why, everything is different. It's not the same place at all. Where are we?

(*Knarf and Ecila run in.*)

KNARF—You're in Topsy Turvy land, of course.

ECILA—Isn't that where you wanted to be?

DERF—(*running in*) 'Cause you're here, whether you want to be or not.

FRANK—So I see. Well, perhaps it is where we wanted to be. At any rate, Fairy Tinkle Bell brought us here, when we were trying to find a place in the geography.

ECILA—I never heard of that place.

FRANK—I never named any place. How do you know you never heard of it?

ECILA—Why, yes you did, too. You told the country you were journeying in, to find some town. I heard you.

FRANK—I did not.

KNARF—Yes, you did. You said you were looking there for this place you wanted.

ALICE—Oh, in the geography. A geography isn't a place. It's a book about places.

DERF—What's a book?

FRANK—A book? Gee! Don't you have books here?

ECILA—His name isn't Gee. It's Derf.

ALICE—That's a queer name. What's yours?

ECILA—It's Ecila. What's yours?

ALICE—Mine is Alice. And what's his name? (*looks toward Knarf.*)

ECILA—It's Knarf.

FRANK—Oh, Frank. Same as mine.

KNARF—No, not same as yours. It's not Frank at all. It's Knarf.

FRANK—How do you spell it?

KNARF—Spell it? I don't know what you mean.

FRANK—Well, write it. Here. (*Takes small pad of paper and pencil from pocket.*)

KNARF—(*taking them*) What are they for.

FRANK—To write with, of course. This way. (*Takes them, and writes.*) See. F—R—A—N—K. That's Frank. That's my name. Write yours.

KNARF—I can't. I never heard of such a thing. Is Frank the name of that thing now? And haven't you any name left, at all?

FRANK—Well, of all the silly questions. Of course it's my name just the same. The name of that thing is paper. And if I spell it backward, it's Knarf, just like yours. I've done it for fun, lots of times.

ECILA—(*to Alice*) Can you separate yourself from your name, that way?

ALICE—Can I write it, you mean? Why, yes. (*does so.*)

See! A—L—I—C—E, spells Alice.

ECILA—Could you do mine?

ALICE—Why, I guess so. Say it again.

ECILA—It's Ecila.

ALICE—It ought to be E—S—I—L—A. Why, if I spell it with a C instead of an S, it will be Alice backward. Guess this *is* Topsy Turvy Land all right. What's your name? (*to Derf.*)

ECILA—It's Derf. Do his on the white thing.

ALICE—(*writing*) D—E—R—F. Why, that's Fred, backward. That's my little brother's name.

ECILA—Yes, and that's my little brother.

FRANK—Little brother! He's a heap bigger than you are.

KNARF—No such thing. It will be a long time before he grows to my size. He's only three.

FRANK—Three. Three what, I wonder? He's taller than my father.

ECILA—You're father must look funny. (*to Alice*) How old are you? I'm ten.

ALICE—Why, so am I, but I'm not nearly so tall. And Frank is twelve.

ECILA—So is Knarf. But he's bigger than I am, and your brother is smaller than you.

FRANK—Well, either I'm dippy, or you are. You say everything topsy turvy.

KNARF—Of course. This is Topsy Turvy Land. How big is your little brother? As small as Derf?

FRANK—He's three, and about so tall. (*measures.*)

ECILA—So when you say small, or little, you mean big. And your father? He's not as little as Derf, you say. How little is he?

DERF—My Daddy's big, real big. Big as that, (*measures.*)

ALICE—He must be tiny. I'd like to see him.

KNARF—I'll call him.

ALICE—Maybe he's busy, or perhaps he wouldn't like to be called just to be looked at.

KNARF—Well, when my own father can't come when he's called, or don't want to be shown off to my friends, I'll see about it. (*calls commandingly.*) Dad!

ALICE—Why, we say that, sometimes. Oh, I see, it's the same both ways.

DAD—(*running in*) Did you call me, Knarf.?

KNARF—Yes, I wanted to show you to these—children, they say they are—just our ages.

DAD—(*staring*) Your ages? They're awful big.

ECILA—(*sternly*) Take off your hat, at once, and stop staring. And making personal remarks, too. That's three points for Friday. (*holds up three fingers.*)

DAD—Oh, I forgot, Ecila. I beg your pardon. Please excuse me this time.

KNARF—No indeed. And before company, too.

DAD—But—

KNARF—Answering back, too. Be quiet, sir. That's four for Friday.

DERF—He sweared, I fink, under his breff. I sawn his lips a-movin'.

KNARF—That's six for Friday.

ECILA—Where's Mom?

DAD—I don't know. Dressing her doll, I think.

ECILA—(*calling*) Mom! Mom!

(*Mom comes running in, doll in hand.*)

MOM—What is it? Oh! (*drops courtesy.*) Happy to see you.

ECILA—You see, I have her well trained. Does your mother mind as quick?

ALICE—My mother? I have to mind her; she doesn't mind me. But is she really your mother?

ECILA—Of course. She wouldn't mind anyone else as quick, would she? (*Mom goes to Dad, who still looks down, sullenly.*)

MOM—What's the matter, dear?

KNARF—He's in disgrace. Don't talk to him. (*Mom gives him a comforting pat.*)

DERF—Her petted him, her did. One for Fiday.

ECILA—Come away, Mom, at once. (*Mom does so.*) Show the company what a pretty behaved mother is like, now. Sing for them.

MOM (*hanging head*) I've got a cold.

ECILA—Nonsense! Stand up at once, and sing. Sing "Looraladdy."

(*Mom acts like a bashful little girl. Ecila shakes her, and she begins to cry.*)

FRANK—Don't make her show off. I know how she feels, I hate it awfully, myself, don't you?

ECILA—Why, I don't know. I never tried. I'm not big enough yet. (*to Mom*) Come, sing! Sing up, now, at once. There's a lot piling up for Friday.

(*Mom sings between sobs, "Loora-laddy, loora-laddy" over and over, a number of times. There should be no particular tune, and no attempt at time. She should end in the middle of a syllable, on some note least fitted for an end.*)

KNARF—There! Next time do as you're told. One for Friday for crying. Now, Dad, you whistle.

DERF—Oh, Mom made a face, her did. One for Friday.

(*Dad begins to whistle, lowdly, but not tunefully. He should whistle in jerks, and keep time with his hands, in some absurd way.*)

FRANK—(*to Dad*) Are you their father, really?

DAD—Of course. You think I mind 'cause I like it, do you?

ECILA—(*to Alice*) Have you a Marg.

ALICE—A Marg. What's that?

ECILA—Why, my Marg was Dad's mother. Some children have two. Have you any?

ALICE—Oh, I see! A grandmother! We do call ours Gram. She likes it. You don't make her mind, do you?

ECILA—Of course. (*calls*) Marg! Marg! Where in Topsy Turvydom is she? Mom, go find her.

DERF—I'll find her. (*goes out.*)

KNARF—Do you mind your father, truly?

FRANK—Of course. I have to.

KNARF—Don't you like to? Then what makes you?

FRANK—He does. No. I don't always like to, but I like it better than I should treating him that way.

KNARF—How funny. (*Derf comes in, pulling Marg behind him. She holds back and struggles, but he pulls her along.*)

DERF—Her was a playin' blocks, and her wouldn't come. Her's a naughty, naughty Marg. Two, fee, for Friday.

ECILA—Naughty Marg! She must come when Ecila calls her. Come here. (*Marg hangs back, and Ecila picks her up, shakes her a bit, then puts her down. Marg sinks down in a heap, crying loudly.*)

DERF—Dere'll be a lot of fees for Friday, if her don't stop 'at noise.

(*Marg cries harder. Knarf sidles up, and surreptitiously passes her a piece of candy. She stops crying at once. Ecila spies candy.*)

ECILA—Now Knarf, you shouldn't spoil her that way! (*to Marg*) Only good Margs ought to have candy. Naughty Margs don't deserve any.

MARG—I'd give you some, Girl, but it's all gone. Are you cross to your Marg? Do you always make her mind quick?

FRANK—Of course not. Our dear Gram does as she pleases, and we all try to please her.

MARG—Why, how nice! Is she as tall as I am?

ECILA—She's as tall as Knarf.

MARG—And a Marg! How very strange!

KNARF—Don't talk so much, Marg. Grown-ups should be seen and not heard.

DERF—It's Friday, it's Friday. Here comes the Spankety Man! (*Dad and Mom look wildly around. Marg hides behind Alice.*)

FRANK—It isn't Friday, either. It's Wednesday.

DERF—'Tis Friday. Spankety Man's a-coming.

ALICE—But it was Wednesday a few minutes ago, and we haven't been to bed yet.

ECILA—What's that got to do with it?

ALICE—Why, it's got to be night before it's another day, hasn't it?

ECILA—Not in Topsy Turvy Land. What a strange country you must live in! Here we jumble our days up more. We don't go by rules; we hate them. We have a lot of days together, and then, when we get sleepy enough, we have a few nights.

FRANK—But Thursday has to come before Friday, doesn't it?

KNARF—Why should it have to? Things don't go by rule here. And it is Friday, for here comes the Spankety Man.

(*Spankety Man enters, sets down bag, and takes out an assortment of spankers, which he lays out on the floor.*)

SPANKETY MAN—(*to Frank*) Good Friday, Sir. I believe we haven't met before. Any parents or grand-parents?

FRANK—Yes.

SPANKETY MAN—Spanking done every Friday. One spank for each point. Settlement every New Year's Day, at so much a hundred. Discount for specially naughty ones. Want to open an account?

FRANK—No.

ALICE—We wouldn't want Papa and Mamma spanked; nor Gram, either. The idea!

SPANKETY MAN—You'll spoil'em, Ma'am, spoil'em. Better patronize me. It's necessary, I assure you.

ALICE—No, indeed.

DERF—Tum, sing your song, and get to work. Marg's awful bad.

SPANKETY MAN (*sings*) Tune: "Michael Roy." (*He beats time, and otherwise emphasizes his song, with one of his spankers.*)

Oh, every Friday in there stalks
The Spankety, Spankety Man.
To every single house he walks,
The Spankety, Spankety Man.
He carries his bag where'er he goes,
A-dangling from his hand.
It holds every kind of spanker known
In Topsy Turvy Land.

Chorus.

For oh, sing ho!
For the Spankety, Spankety Man!
Bring out your naughty Dads and Moms,
To the Spankety, Spankety Man.
He lives far away by the crimson sea,
The Spankety, Spankety Man.
In a little red house by a whip-whop tree,
The Spankety, Spankety Man.
He gathers the whips and dries them well,
With all the sting left in.
And the spankers, too, that grow on the hill,
Are gathered and dried by him.

ALICE—I think you're horrid!

SPANKETY MAN—Ma'am?

ALICE—I said I think you're horrid.

SPANKETY MAN—I only do my duty, Ma'am, and earn an honest living. You wouldn't want to have to do all your own spanking, would you?

ALICE—I don't believe in spanking, at all.

SPANKETY MAN—Oh, if you're an unbeliever, it's no use to argue, but "Spare the spanks and spoil the Dads" is a true maxim, just the same. Well, we'll begin with Marg, as usual. How many points? And which spanker?

(*Ecila takes a watch from her pocket, and Derf picks out a spanker.*)

DERF—Dis one.

ECILA—Seventy-two, I'm sorry to say. Come, Marg. Why, where is she?

ALICE—You shan't spank that dear little grandmother. The idea!

SPANKETY MAN—Business is business, Ma'am. Please step aside.

ALICE—I shan't. You shan't touch her.

FRANK—(*stepping to her side*) No indeed, you sha'nt. Let her alone. (*All gather around them, and Dad and Mom seize the opportunity to sneak off platform, encouraged by nods and gestures from Frank.*)

SPANKETY MAN—Will you move aside?

ALICE—No.

SPANKETY MAN—Then it will have to be postponed till next Friday, for here comes the Teacher.

FRANK—I'm glad of it. She'll make you behave.

KNARF—No, she won't. *She's* a *he*, and *we* make *him* behave. (*to Spankety Man*) Get your ruler ready.

ALICE—(*to Marg*) Do you know your lessons?

MARG—I don't have to. I don't have to ask the questions, nor answer them. The children ask them and the Teacher answers them. If he misses, he's punished.

FRANK—Just as I've always wished it might be. I'll ask the first one.

KNARF—You may. You're company. (*Enter Teacher, looking worried.*)

KNARF—Begin. Ask him one.

FRANK—What's the capital of Massachusetts?

(*Teacher stares at him in astonishment.*)

SPANKETY MAN—Oh, I say, that isn't fair. You must ask questions that mean something.

FRANK—Why, I did.

TEACHER—Then two of the words were in a foreign language. I'm the Common Teacher. Foreign languages come in High.

FRANK—Well, I had to learn it, and a lot more like it.

ECILA—You ask one. Ask a fair one.

ALICE—How much are two and two?

TEACHER—Twenty-two.

KNARF—Right. Where did these children come from?

TEACHER—From—from—from the farthest dominions of Topsy Turvy Land, I should say.

KNARF—(*to Frank*) Is that right?

FRANK—Why, no. We came from—(*Give name of town and State where play is being given.*)

TEACHER—There's no such place.

FRANK—There is, too. It's in the United States of America.

TEACHER—There's no such place as that, either.

ALICE—Why, everyone knows the United States, all over the earth.

SPANKETY MAN—Did you come from the earth?

FRANK—Of course. Did you think we came from Mars?

TEACHER—No, for this is Mars. But it isn't fair to ask me questions about the Earth. All our most learned men have been able to discover about the earth is that it is a very slow-moving, dull star which turns on itself once every month or two, and takes about a century to get around the sun. The winters are so long and cold that no life is possible. It is supposed to be a worn out planet.

FRANK—The idea! It's every bit wrong.

ECILA—Keep points, Mr. Spankety Man. (*to Teacher*) How did they get here?

TEACHER—I don't know.

DERF—Him don't know. Dat's five points, or fee, which is it? It's my turn. What's the biggest nanimal in Topsy Turvy Land?

TEACHER—The Wincheopactylus. He is very large and fierce, and lives on new inhabitants, whom he eats raw. His voice is a high trill, and he gives warning of his presence—

KNARF—He certainly does. There's one coming now. Run, everybody, run!

(*All run out, in confusion, with screams and cries, dragging Frank and Alice with them. If a tiny dog, or large cat, can be made to walk across the stage after them, it will add to the climax of the scene.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

(*Room in home of Frank and Alice in Topsy Turvy Land,*)

(*Enter Frank and Alice.*)

ALICE—There! Just look at this room! I pick up and pick up, and the minute I go out, when I come back it's all to do over again. I never was so sick of anything in all my life, as I am of this Topsy Turvy Land!

FRANK—(*placing chair correctly, and sitting down*) I wish I could get hold of that Fairy for a few minutes, that's what!

ALICE—(*also sitting down*) What could you do with a fairy, I'd like to know? She'd do something to you before you could say "Jack Robinson." (*She looks up, crossly, as Knarf enters and seats himself on a chair, just as it is.*) I do wish, Knarf, you'd learn to knock!

KNARF—And I do wish, Alice, that you'd remember that our music teacher has told us over and over, never to knock, even if you do request it, since it is a bad breach of good manners to do so.

ECILA—(*entering and seating herself*) Don't you like company, really, Alice?

ALICE—Why, I like you, Ecila, as well, or better, than anything else in this awful place. But—(*begins to cry*) Oh, I'm so homesick, and so tired of everything being topsy turvy! If I could go home, I'd never complain about minding again, or rules, either!

KNARF—Well, of course it is too bad that you haven't any grown-ups to make mind.

ALICE—I don't want to make anyone mind. I want my own dear mother and father and grandma, too. I'd be glad to mind them, if I could only get a chance.

ECILA—If you could only find the Fairy who brought you here—

FRANK—Well, we can't. We've hunted and hunted, but we never seem to get anywhere when we start out.

KNARF—Of course not. All roads lead to nowhere in Topsy Turvy Land. Did yours lead somewhere?

FRANK—Of course they did. And our teachers knew something. They made you study and learn your lessons, instead of calling you a hopeless little blockhead because you didn't ask them a lot of foolish questions about nothing in particular.

ALICE—And that music teacher is just the limit. Manners, indeed! The things he calls manners are the most impolite things imaginable. And dancing! To walk slowly here and there, and sit down every so many steps isn't dancing!

KNARF—What is it, then?

FRANK—Tomfoolery. And what he calls whistling is nothing more than buzzing! Music teacher! He dosen't teach a bit of music!

KNARF—Why, manners and dancing and whistling are music.

ALICE—They are not! The only thing the least bit like music that I've heard since I came here is that measly little song the Spankety Man sings every Friday.

ECILA—That isn't music! That queer noise he makes! And all the Moms know loora-laddy. I should think you'd call that music.

ALICE—Well, I don't. And I don't even know what time of year it is. Your days and nights are so mixed up that one can't keep track of them at all. We shan't even know when the Christmas holidays come.

KNARF—Yes, you will, for they're here now, just as soon as Gother Moose gets here.

DERF—(*entering and seating himself in the overturned table*) Gother Moose is a coming, now.

ALICE—Mother Goose, I bet it is. Is she real?

DERF—Course her is!

ECILA—Why shouldn't she be?

ALICE—Why, our Mother Goose is just a book of rhymes and jingles—sort of stories, you know.

DERF—Dat's what Gother Moose does—tells stories. Here her comes.

GOTHER MOOSE—(*entering*) Well, well, whom have we here?

DERF—Erf chilluns.

GOTHER MOOSE—Earth children! I'm afraid they belong under the jurisdiction of my sin twister, who tells her stories in a queer, jerky sort of fashion. Call in the others, and I'll be about my task,

for I must journey on to make the Christmas holidays begin in the other places. I'm late, as it is. (*Dad, Mom, and Marg run in, and seat themselves, all using the furniture as it is. Gother Moose remains standing.*)

GOTHER MOOSE—What shall I tell you this time?

DERF—Hackey Jorner.

GOTHER MOOSE—Hackey Jorner was a very little boy, no bigger than Derf. One time he sat down in the middle of the room, where the sides came together, and put his foot into the oven, which was very cold. He pulled out a very small pie, all piping hot, and held it neatly on his knuckles. Then with his fingers on the other hand, he began to eat it. He took a bite, then he took another, then he took another, then he took another, then he took another, then he took another, then he took another, then—

FRANK—Oh, go on! Never mind so many bites.

GOTHER MOOSE—But he has only had eight bites. That would be too large a pie, and this was a small one. So he took another bite, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then he took another, and then—what do you think?

FRANK—Oh, he took another, probably.

ALICE—No, he found a plum.

GOTHER MOOSE—A plum? What a queer word! No he found no plum, he found—that he couldn't take another, because his pie was gone.

DERF—Tell anodder. Dat was a fine one. Wasn't it, Alice?

FRANK—Very nice indeed—quite all of a sameness.

GOTHER MOOSE—Ecila may choose this time.

ECILA—Little Po Beeb.

GOTHER MOOSE—Little Po Beeb had one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve, woolly cats. One night Po Beeb did not go to sleep at all, but sat up watching her woolly cats, and as she watched, they trotted off, down the hill to the very top, then out of sight, and—

ALICE—She couldn't tell where to find them.

GOTHER MOOSE—Certainly she could. They were just under the top of the hill, behind a very small tree. Po Beeb and the Spankety Man walked after them, and they all came right back. They had gone for a drink of water.

ALICE—So they all came home, wagging their tails behind them.

GOTHER MOOSE—Certainly not. They did not come home, they went home, and they had no tails at all. Cats never have any tails. And no animal in Topsy-Turvy Land, except the terrible Wincheopactylus, ever wears its tail behind it. It always dangles gracefully forward over the left shoulder. But I must hurry on, to tell the Christmas stories to other Topsy Turvy children. Badgye. Watch for Clanty Sauce.

KNARF AND ECILA—We will.

DERF—Yes, us will.

ALICE—Clanty Sauce! Oh, Frank, perhaps he's our own dear Santa Claus, and will take us home.

FRANK—You can't catch Santa Claus. Haven't we tried, lots of times and did we catch even a glimpse of him?

ECILA—What a shame! So you never got any presents?

ALICE—Of course we did. But— (*start as Greenies come tumbling in*) what are these?

DERF—The Greenies! The Greenies!

GREENIES—

The Greenies are we. As sly as can be,
We creep to your window, at night, you see.
And whisper low, as the still winds blow,
"Watch for Old Clanty Sauce, don't let him go!"

(*Shout out the fourth line as loudly as possible.*)

FRANK—That's what you'd call whispering. What would a shout be like, I wonder?

GREENIES—

The Greenies are we. As loud as can be,
We call to the children to look and see.
And loudly shout, as we scamper out,

(*Seat themselves on floor, and whisper last line.*)

"Watch for old Clanty Sauce. He's round about."

(*Greenies rise and begin to tiptoe about, peering in every nook and corner, and just as intently into the air, or the middle of the floor.*)

ALICE—Well, I shan't watch for him. He dosen't like it.

GREENIES—Then you won't get no presents, nor nothing, not never.

FRANK—What grammar.

ALICE—It's Topsy Turvy language, I suppose. But how about the presents?

ECILA—Why—(*turns to Marg, who has been sitting demurely, without a word, since entering, as have Dad and Mom.*) Marg, you are the biggest. You tell the little girl about the presents.

MARG—Why, old Clanty Sauce always brings a whole lot of them.

FRANK—Sure. On his back.

MARG—Why, no. In a big box in his arms. And if you see him, he'll give you some.

DERF—And if you don't see him, you won't det none, not nany tall.

GREENIES—

Watch for old Clanty. He lives in a shanty
Way down in the hot, hot north.
The Greenies come tumbling and rolling and rumbling,
To tell when old Clanty comes forth.

(*They begin to roll and tumble. While the children watch them, Frank takes his paper out, and begins to write.*)

KNARF (*suspiciously*) What you doing?

FRANK—Writing him a letter, to tell him what I want.

KNARF—Well, you just stop it.

FRANK—Why?

KNARF—Last place, because he couldn't make tail nor head of it any way.

DERF—Next pace, 'cause taint no good manners to tell what you want.

ECILA—First place, 'cause he always knows what you want, anyway, and brings the nicest things you can think of.

ALICE—Oh, it must be our own dear Santa. Perhaps we really will see him. (*Clanty, who has peeped in, and quickly drawn back.*) Perhaps not. (*Marg has slowly drawn near door, and been watching closely. When Clanty draws back, she has him by the leg, and pulls him in.*)

MARG—Perhaps we will.

(*Rest of Topsy Turvy folks.*)

See! We see! Old Clanty's caught!
He'll give us presents, as he ought.

(*Clanty tries to break away, but they surround him.*)

CLANTY—(*to Greenies*) Step out and fetch the box. (*They run out, and return, dragging a large box.*)

ALICE—Oh, it isn't our Santa at all!

CLANTY—

Not Santa, but Clanty, who lives in a shanty,
And makes pretty presents for all.
He'll find in the box, who loud on it knocks,
There's something for great and for small.

ECILA—Have you something for earth children too, Clanty dear?

CLANTY—

There's something to please all, within. Never fear.

Come, Marg, you're the biggest, so you first shall knock,
And open the box without hinges or lock.

(*Marg steps up, courtesies low to Clanty, and knocks three times on box, repeating.*)

MARG—Open box, shut box. This is Marg who loudly knocks.

(*Box opens and boy within, hidden from audience by raised cover, hands Marg a baby doll, which should be dressed backward, a rattle, a box of blocks, an orange, and a bag of candy, then closes box.*)

MARG—(*courtesying again*) Yuur'e welcome Clanty Sauce.

(*She sits down on floor, in centre, so others have to step around her, and begins building houses with her blocks, hugging her dolly, upside down, and eating candy, at the same time.*)

CLANTY—

Mom is next to open the box.
See what she gets when she knocks.

(*Mom steps up, courtesies, knocks three times, and repeats couplet. Boy hands her a teaset, an orange, a bag of candy, and a sled.*)

MOM—(*courtesying*) You're welcome, Clanty Sauce.

(*She sits down on sled and begins to set a table on it, placing every thing topsy turvy, of course. Then she begins to bite her orange, setting pieces of candy as best she may on the dishes, and keeping an eye out towards Dad.*)

CLANTY—

Dad's gifts from the box come next,
If he can plainly say the text.

(*Dad bows low, knocks, repeats couplet, and gets one skate, a small bag of stones, an orange, and candy.*)

DAD—(*bowing*) You're welcome, Clanty Sauce.

(*Dad sits down near Frank, and begins to try on skate, wrong side up, and hind side before.*)

FRANK—That's not the way.

DAD—(*beginning to stuff his candy*) Hush, you mustn't talk! (*Frank looks indignant, but stops.*)

CLANTY—

Derf next in the box may see
At his gifts he'll howl with glee.

(*Derf repeats bow, knock, and formula, and receives a very large slipper, a pipe, an orange, and candy.*)

DERF—(*bowing*) You're welcome, Clanty Sauce. (*gives a shout.*) Dese are dandy presents.

FRANK—(*aside*)I should think so! Hope mine won't be like them.

(*Derf sits down, puts both feet into one slipper, puts pipe in mouth so bowl points downward, and occasionally pops in a piece of candy without removing pipe from mouth.*)

CLANTY—

Next comes Ecila so dear.
She'll find something nice, 'tis clear.
And Knarf may try his luck, also.
He'll find something nice, I know.

(*They advance together, go through formula, and receive presents. Knarf gets a handkerchief and a necktie, and Ecila a pincushion and a pair of scissors. Both receive oranges and candy. They repeat together "You're welcome, Clanty Sauce," then go back to places. Ecila puts scissors into her hair, for an ornament, and sits down on the pincushion, beginning to eat her orange. Knarf ties the necktie on his ankle, knots the handkerchief into a cap, and munches his candy.*)

CLANTY—

Now, Earth children, knock on the box. No fear
But there'll be something you like, in here.

(*Frank and Alice repeat the formula. Alice gets an engine and an air-gun, and Frank a doll and a wide pink ribbon. Both get the inevitable orange and candy.*)

BOTH—Thank you, Santa Claus. But we may exchange presents, mayn't we?

CLANTY—

No change is allowed. If to change two should dare,
Their presents would melt away into thin air.
Come, Greenies, the box drag out, I must away,
When my gifts are all given, no longer I stay.

(*Greenies drag out box. Clanty follows.*)

ALL—(*save Frank and Alice*) You're welcome, Clanty Sauce, you're welcome!

(*Frank and Alice stand gazing at their presents.*)

ECILA—Why don't you eat your orange?

KNARF—And the candy's great. It's sweet as can be!

(*Both pop a piece of candy into their mouths, but quickly take it out.*)

ALICE—It's awful sour!

FRANK—Sourer than a lemon.

KNARF—Sweeter than a lemon, you mean. Don't you know sweet from sour?

ALICE—Is it all what you call sweet?

DERF—'Course. Candy's always sweet. Don't you like it, Girl?

ALICE—No, I don't. You may have the whole bagful.

KNARF—Give me yours, old chap, if you don't like it.

FRANK—No, Marg may have mine. She's little.

KNARF—I should think she was!

ECILA—Try the orange. Perhaps you'll like that better.

ALICE—(*suspiciously regarding hers*) Is that sweet, too?

ECILA—No.

FRANK—Is it sour?

ECILA—Why, no. It's—just orangy tasting.

(*The children taste theirs, gingerly, then Frank throws his, and Derf scrambles to get it.*)

FRANK—(*indignantly*) Do you call pepper orangy tasting?

KNARF—Aren't they like yours?

ALICE—Why, no. They're hot with pepper.

ECILA—I don't know what pepper is, but oranges here always taste like that. They're good, I think.

ALICE—Then you may have mine (*passes it.*) Oh, Frank, don't swing her by one leg, like that!

FRANK—(*holding doll out and looking at it.*) Well, what do I want of the thing? And if we can't swap—

ALICE—We can play with each other's things. (*holds out hand for doll.*)

ECILA—(*catching her hand back*) You musn't. No one can touch another's Christmas presents. If they do, they'll get caught by the Wincheopactylus, and eaten for his Christmas dinner.

FRANK—Well, of all the mean Christmasses! That gun and engine are dandy, if only I had 'em, though! (*Looks at Knarf, who is counting over his stones.*) What are those good for?

KNARF—Why, they're kites.

FRANK—Kites. We call 'em rocks, or stones. You can't fly them, I know.

KNARF—Oh yes, I can. You know that tall place you called a well? They'll fly clear to the top of that, if I drop 'em.

FRANK—(*indignantly, looking at Dad*) And see that one skate! Where's the mate to it?

DAD—It doesn't need a mate. You only skate on one foot at a time, you know.

FRANK—I should think you'd look pretty, balancing on one skate on the ice.

ALL—Why, we don't skate on *ice!*

ALICE—(*beginning to cry*) Oh, I want to go home. I want to go home! It's a dreadful Christmas! Oh, I'd be so good if I could only go home!

FRANK—So would I. No more grumbling for this young chap.

FAIRY—(*dancing in*) So you've come to your senses?

FRANK—Yes, indeed we have, dear Fairy. If you'll only take us home, we'll mind our teachers and parents, and be willing to keep rules, and learn lessons.

FAIRY—You will? And you, Alice?

ALICE—Oh, take us home, dear Fairy, do! I'll be so good, if you will.

FAIRY—And you'll remember the lessons you've learned?

BOTH—We will. We couldn't help it. (*Fairy has flitted to front. They have followed, leaving all the others where curtain will hide them when it falls.*)

FAIRY—Then close your eyes, take hold of hands, and turn around three times, saying, "Home again, home again, never to return again," then open your eyes, and you'll see what you'll see.

(*As they do so, inner curtain falls, and she flits out. As they open their eyes, she calls back, "Remember."*)

ALICE—Oh we are, we are, back again! There's the schoolhouse!

FRANK—And I'm glad to see it. Think of that! What a dreadful place Topsy Turvy Land was!

ALICE—I'm sure we'll remember our promise. Only think if we had to go back again!

FRANK—There's just one thing I wish I'd seen—that awful wild beast of theirs.

ALICE—It might have eaten you up. I'm glad we didn't see it. No more Topsy Turvy things for me. I think it was all dreadful.

FRANK—And the worst of all was that Topsy Turvy Christmas!

ALICE—Let's run home and find out if Christmas has really come here.

FRANK—Let's hope it hasn't.

BOTH—But no Christmas at all would be better than a Topsy Turvy Christmas! (*Both run out, hand in hand.*)

CURTAIN.

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